A SHORT ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS OF DR. SIBSON

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OF THE

Life and Writings

OF

FRANCIS SIBSON, M.D.

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A SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE

Life and Writings

OF

FRANCIS SIBSON

M.D. LOND.,

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY,
HONORARY M.D. TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN, AND D.C.L. DURHAM,
FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, LONDON, ETC.

1814-76

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By WILLIAM M. ORD, M.D.

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A SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS OF DR. SIBSON.

Francis Sibson was born at Cross Canonby, near Maryport, in Cumberland. His father, a man of great learning and eccentric character, was educated for the Church, but, from conscientious motives, did not take holy orders. Having lost his fortune, he removed in 1819 with his family to Edinburgh. An extract from the baptismal register in St. Peter's Episcopal Church shows that he caused his children, five in number, to be baptized on one day, shortly after his change of residence. The record gives their names and ages as follows:—

John, son of Francis Sibson and Jane his wife, born September 21st, 1810.
Joseph, born 28th February, 1812.
Francis, born 21st May, 1814.
Thomas, born 3rd May, 1817.
Samuel, born 29th May, 1819.

The date thus indicated for Francis Sibson's birth is not, at first sight, easily reconciled with the date of his diploma from the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh,—December 21st, 1831,—inasmuch as he would have been only a few months above seventeen years of age when the diploma was conferred. But it appears, from information courteously furnished by Dr. Joseph Bell, Treasurer of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, that candidates under the age of twenty-one were in 1831 permitted to receive the licence, and that Sibson's age is registered (without date of birth) as eighteen years.

Of the earlier years of his life little is known, save that he received his school education in Edinburgh; that he lost his mother and three of his brothers early; that he was devotedly attached to his brother Thomas, an artist of considerable talent, and a favourite pupil of Kaulbach, of Munich; and that from an early period he was called upon to help in supporting his father and brother.

In 1828, when, according to the date referred to, he must have been fourteen years of age, he was apprenticed to that distinguished anatomist, Professor John Lizars, and three years later he received his diploma. The years 1831 and 1832 saw the first outbreak of cholera in this country. Sibson, with the courage and thirst for investigation which marked his whole life, at once volunteered to serve in the cholera hospitals. He was thus employed first at

Leith and Newhaven, afterwards in Edinburgh. Contemporary letters speak in warm terms of his attention and thoroughness in the treatment of the victims of this terrible epidemic, doubly terrible then by reason of its novelty and strangeness. After this, Sibson appears to have entertained, for a short time at least, the idea of entering upon general practice. Professor Lizars, writing in September, 1833, congratulates him on having joined Dr. Allonby, of Cockermouth, and cheers him on thus: "Only do you keep sober and attentive, and you will soon be the first man in Cockermouth; and if you find that it does not satisfy you, you can in a few years hence remove to Carlisle." Apparently the prospect did not satisfy him, for soon after he proceeded to London, and entered on further studies at Guy's Hospital, where he resided for some months, having duties in connection with the Pathological department. Here he earned the warm admiration and regard of Dr. Hodgkin, who from that time onward "never ceased to encourage him in all his labours, and to aid him in every way that could lead to success." [1]

In 1835 he obtained the appointment of Resident Surgeon and Apothecary to the Nottingham General Hospital. During thirteen years he continued to hold this office; years of steady work for him in both practice and science. The wide and varied experience

[1] See Sir James Paget's obituary notice of Dr. Sibson in his Presidential Address delivered before the *Royal Medico-Chirurgical Society*, 1877, p. 24.

afforded by the double duties of this office gave him a broad foundation for the observations of his later years, and no doubt helped to develope the sagacious insight into disease which made him so valuable in consultation. Far, however, from being content with the acquisition of such knowledge as could be gained in the ordinary discharge of duty, Sibson threw himself with ardour into the path of independent observation and research. The studies of his life began here. The subject of his first paper, "A Flexible Stethoscope," published in the *Medical Gazette* for 1840, indicates the particular direction of his thoughts — the diagnosis of chest-disease. And not a little does it illustrate his readiness to avail himself of all instruments by the aid of which his research might be deeper, or his estimations more accurate.

In 1844 he produced his first important paper— "On Changes induced in the Situation and Structure of the Internal Organs under varying circumstances of Health and Disease." This paper at once brought him a high reputation, and was followed in two years by a laborious essay on "The Mechanism of Respiration," published in the *Philosophical Transactions*. In both of these minuteness of observation, mechanical skill, and artistic accuracy are conspicuous; in both the influence and active guidance of his early friend, Dr. Hodgkin, are to be plainly seen, as indeed they are gratefully acknowledged by the author.

During the next few years a rapid succession of papers on cognate subjects were contributed by him to various journals. Each and all of them contained new matter of much importance, but he was careful in each to set before his reader the knowledge already acquired in the subject under consideration; so that they collectively embody, in addition to the new facts, the results of his early work, sometimes indeed a little painfully recapitulated. He seems to have been impelled to use the same unsparing care in putting the basis of his observations before his readers—care that they should not lose a line that might be necessary to a comprehension of the ultimate teaching—as he bestowed on his investigations in the wards and the dead-house. These studies, however, did not suffice to command his undivided attention. Towards the end of his sojourn in Nottingham appeared papers by him on the "Fever of Nottingham" (1847), on the treatment of neuralgia by inhalation of ether and chloroform (1847 and 1848), and on the action of narcotic poisons (1848). These papers doubtless had their origin in his local surroundings. The interest which he then and afterwards took in the action of narcotics was probably quickened by his association with Charles Waterton, the naturalist of the *Wanderings*. That remarkable man then lived at Walton Hall, a long drive from Nottingham. Sibson's acquaintance with him soon ripened to an intimate friendship. The wourali poison had

been recently brought to England by Waterton, and the two friends spent much time in making experiments with it. Some of the most important of Sibson's determinations regarding the action of the heart in animals were made with the aid of this substance. It was expected by Waterton that wourali would prove to be a cure for hydrophobia. He and Sibson carried on a long correspondence on the subject; and were always on the look-out for a case in which the remedy might be applied. But it appears from the correspondence that they never met with the chance, although Waterton more than once drove over to Nottingham with the hope of making the experiment, which he always insisted on doing in person.

It was by the advice of friends that Sibson made the resolution of quitting Nottingham for London. In relation to this important step his friend Mr. White, of Nottingham, writes: "We often discussed, and I as often advised his removal from Nottingham to London, where he would have a wider range for the development of his special talents. This he ultimately determined to do, but not as a surgeon. He had resolved to take his degree and practise as a physician, but there was one great obstacle—his salary had never been large, and his accumulation of capital was exceedingly limited. He could not possibly pass his examinations in less than six months, and it might take nearer twelve months to acquire the indispensable qualifications. He had told his fears and anxieties

to a sympathetic friend, who gave him the best possible proofs, more tangible than mere assurance, that during the period of study whatever he needed beyond his own resources would be provided. And so he came to London." . . . . "No sooner did it become bruited about in Nottingham that Sibson was likely to leave than very earnest endeavours were made to retain him. The loss to the town was felt to be so great that one of the most highly esteemed professional men in the place made up his mind to retire from his practice, and offered to hand it over to Sibson free—absolutely free—so soon as he had taken his degree, if he would only remain in Nottingham. It was an offer made in all sincerity, and in all sincerity refused. He had chosen London as the theatre of his practice, and to London he would go. On leaving the town a handsome testimonial was presented to him, but who the donors were was always kept a profound secret. The amount, however, was such as to render his early residence in London pretty free from anxiety." Within the year—before 1848 was passed—he graduated successively as Bachelor and Doctor of Medicine at the University of London. The examination for the M.B. was held between the 6th and 23rd of November. Sibson was placed in the first division at the pass, and subsequently took honours in medicine. In the list of honours in medicine for that year the name of Habershon stands first, that of Wilks fourth, that of

Sibson fifth, and that of Savory sixth. Within a week from the termination of the M.B. examination he proceeded to the M.D. He again passed in the first division, and received the gold medal for his commentary. In the pass list appear with his the names of Barnes, Brinton, and Tyler Smith. "Very few men," says a writer in the *British Medical Journal*, "would be equal to the great feat of grasping the great range of subjects involved in passing the whole series of examinations required for the degrees of the University of London in the same year; and to have done so while in practice, with such distinction, competing against the pick of the best men working in the regular course in the London Schools, affords an indication of his remarkable industry and intellectual power." In the next year, 1849, he became a member of the Royal College of Physicians; and having, in addition to the paper on "The Mechanism of Respiration" already mentioned, contributed a description of the "Blow-hole of the Porpoise" to the *Philosophical Transactions*, he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society. Being now settled down in practice in Brook Street, he gave, at his house, during the winter session of this year, a series of demonstrations in visceral anatomy before a select professional assembly. As the demonstrations proceeded, the number of his audience steadily increased, and at last became too large for the space available. It was now felt that he had made his mark in London, as he had already in Nottingham,

and when, in 1851, St. Mary's Hospital was opened he was appointed one of the physicians, in company with Dr. Alderson and Dr. T. K. Chambers. At about the same time he became Lecturer on Medicine in the Grosvenor Place School of Medicine adjoining St. George's Hospital. The organization of the new hospital afforded him an occupation, to which he did not fail to devote much time and pains. When, some years later, a Medical School was established in connection with it, he took a part of the Chair of Medicine.

Meanwhile he was intently engaged in planning and in arranging the materials for his great work on Medical Anatomy. To this every leisure moment was devoted. The plates were worked up under his constant supervision by skilful artists. The drawings, some 200 in number, were made with every care to ensure the most complete transcription of the appearances presented by the cases selected for illustration, many of which were cases in St. Mary's Hospital. Year after year the patient and laborious accumulation proceeded, till eighteen years had passed. It was not till 1869 that the work now initiated was to be finally published.

He was elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in 1853, and in the following year gave the Gulstonian Lectures. From this point onwards we find him filling a great part in the medical life of London, in relations so various and so important,

in lines so individually distinct, that a chronological record of his doings for each successive year would give only a confused idea of what he was about. His studies went on unceasingly at home and in the hospital, in moments snatched from the busy day, in hours yielded from what should have been given to the night's rest ; while outside, in the world, he was in active practice, and making his energy and strength felt in public life. There were few departments of medical or scientific life in which his voice was not heard. His work in the Royal Society, in the University of London, in the College of Physicians, in the British Medical Association, in the various medical societies, and elsewhere, will be most suitably considered in succession later on. In 1858 he married Sarah Mary, younger daughter of Peter Aimé Ouvry, Esq., of East Acton. With her he lived in unbroken happiness till his death. By her loving hand the volumes to which these lines form an introduction have been brought together. Lastly, to use her simple words, "in August, 1876, he left England for a month's rest, and on his way home, at Geneva, on the 7th of September, the day before he intended reaching England, his life ended. Being apparently as well as usual, he suddenly fell down insensible and never spoke again. He was brought to England, and rests in Acton Churchyard."

Of all the objects of Sibson's work, his hospital was probably nearest to his heart. We have seen that he

became Physician to St. Mary's in 1851. There for twenty years—the allotted tenure of the office—he went on incessantly observing, incessantly recording, at all times patient and profuse in clinical teaching, stamping the pupil mind with the double die of enthusiasm and accuracy, respectful, as an artist must be, towards every line of detail which went to make the picture of any morbid state. He drew freely upon the material collected at St. Mary's for his article on Pericarditis in Reynolds's *System of Medicine*, and for his Presidential Address read before the British Medical Association in 1870. When, at the end of his twenty years, he retired with the rank of Consulting Physician he was presented with a testimonial of esteem by old and present pupils.

In the Royal Society he was not idle. He served on the Council in 1872-4, and was for some years Joint Treasurer of the Royal Society Club in association with his friend, Captain Douglas Galton. The duties of this office were singularly congenial to him. His warm and sympathetic nature is said to have infused much vigour and cheerfulness into the meetings of this distinguished club.

At the Royal College of Physicians, beside delivering in due succession the Gulstonian, Croonian, and Lumleian lectures, he acted as Examiner in Medicine, as Secretary to the Committee on the Classification of Diseases, and as Editor of *The Nomenclature of Diseases*. The great labours devolving on him in the

last capacity, and the importance of the share taken by him both in originating and in bringing the work to completion, were warmly recognised by the College. A handsome present of plate marked the estimation in which his services were held by that body. He acted also for many years as Curator of the Museum, and not long before his death was one of the Censors.

At the University of London he held for a time the Examinership in Medicine. In 1865 he was nominated, by Convocation, to the Senate. He was constant and earnest in his attendance at the Senate, and both therein and in Convocation fought earnestly in defence of what he believed to be the interests of the profession and the University. In this aspect he opposed the admission of women to medical degrees; in this he resolutely set his face against the anti-vivisection agitation. His earnest face and athletic figure were rarely absent from the platform on the occasion of the annual "Presentation day."

His relations to the British Medical Association are set forth in the *Journal* of the Association (Sept. 30th, 1876), by the pen of his pupil and afterwards colleague, Mr. Ernest Hart. The account there given must in fact be quoted in full, as comprehending all that should be said, and as saying it in singularly fit words: "Dr. Sibson appears to have become a member of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association in 1843, the year in which he read his paper on

the 'Position of the Internal Organs' at the Leeds meeting. At the annual meeting at Worcester in 1849 he moved a resolution to petition Parliament on the subject of secret poisoning by arsenic, and was appointed a member of a committee (of which the other members were Sir Charles Hastings, Mr. Fuge, Dr. Hodgkin, Dr. Toogood, and Dr. Tunstall) to co-operate with the Pharmaceutical Society in preparing a series of resolutions concerning the sale of arsenic. In the work of this committee Dr. Sibson took an active share, and the result of its proceedings was the passing in 1852 of the Act regulating the sale of arsenic. At the meeting in Worcester, Dr. Sibson delivered the address in Physiology, taking as his subject, 'The Causes which excite and influence Respiration in Health and Disease.' This address was published in the *Transactions* for 1850. vol. xviii. In 1854 he was nominated, under the then existing *régime*, a member of the General Council of the Association. In the animated discussions which took place in this and the following year regarding the proposed name of the Association from 'Provincial' to 'British' Dr. Sibson was at first one of those who regarded the proposal with apprehension; but he subsequently gave his cordial assent and co-operation in adopting and carrying into effect the new constitution. In 1861, and again in 1864, 1865, and 1866, he was chosen by the Metropolitan Counties Branch as a member of the General Council of the Association, and in 1866, on the death

of Sir Charles Hastings, was elected President of the Council for three years. On his retirement from this office he was appointed a Vice-president for life of the Association. At the annual meeting in Dublin in 1867 the honorary degree of M.D. was conferred on him by the University of that city. At the meeting at Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1870 Dr. Sibson made the address in Medicine, the subject being 'The Treatment of Rheumatism and Gout,' illustrated by elaborate statistics of a large number of cases. On the same occasion the honorary degree of LL.D. was conferred on him by the University of Durham. At the annual meeting in London, 1873, he was President of the Section of Medicine. As a member of the Committee of Council, both as President of Council, and in 1869, as Vice-president of the Association, Dr. Sibson was most regular in attendance. It was at his suggestion that in 1874 the proposal was made to apply a portion of the funds of the Association in grants for scientific research. At the first meeting of the Scientific Grants Sub-Committee he was appointed Chairman, and held that office up to the time of his death. Dr. Sibson was one of the earliest members of the Metropolitan Counties Branch, and in 1863 was elected President. During his year of office the Branch exerted itself to obtain an improvement of the regulations affecting the medical service of the army; and, with this object, deputations of its members waited

on the Secretary for War (Lord de Grey and Ripon), the Duke of Cambridge, and Dr. Gibson, the Director-General. It fell to Dr. Sibson, as President, to take an active part in these deputations, and it was soon evident that the part which he took in the matter was not merely that of one who felt himself bound to perform an official duty, but of one who felt warmly on the subject. When the condition of the army medical officers was, in the same year (1864), brought before the general meeting of the Association in Cambridge, he was appointed one of the members of a Committee to consider what steps should be taken in the matter."

In the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London he was Member of Council, 1863-4; a member of the Committee on Chloroform for 1873 to 1876. In every office, as Sir James Paget has said, he set himself a high standard of duty and fulfilled it. If his official duties were many and various, he may be seen to have brought one determination to bear in every several capacity. He must do the routine work of the appointment faithfully. This, however, did not suffice. His mind caught sight readily of the broader relations of every line of official work; his conscience was never content to accept things as they were—he was impelled to advance with the whole force of his being each kind of work in its proper line. Such a genius and such a mental capacity were not likely to be passed unnoticed by men

outside medical office. In 1867 he was placed by the Government of the day on the Committee appointed to inquire into the state of Greenwich Hospital. In 1875 he was one of the Space Committee under the Poor Law Board. And as an outcome of the experience here gained, he became an active member of the Metropolitan District Asylums Board. In the choice of sites for the new hospital for infectious diseases, and in the constructions of the plans for the buildings to be founded on these sites, he was abundantly consulted. It is not saying too much, if it be asserted that much of their present efficiency is really due to his well-balanced provisions. He supported strongly the pavilion system, and maintained always that for the best working of this system it was necessary that the blocks should be of only two storeys, instead of four or five. The hospital at Stockwell is in the main an embodiment of his views on this subject. Nursing, as well as hospitals, put in a claim to his help. He worked with and helped considerably the associations for providing trained Nurses for the sick poor.

In appearance Dr. Sibson was fair of complexion, above the middle height, broad shouldered and athletic. He walked always with his head thrown forward and shoulder back; a long, swift, swinging stride carried him quickly over the ground; and, mostly, he was so involved in thought as to be little conscious of things near him. He was an early riser, being, in the

later years of his life at least, accustomed to go out for a walk at six or seven o'clock in the morning, winter and summer. In his walks he commonly carried, Schaibar-like, a bar of iron, formed like a walking-stick, and weighing nine pounds. A very formidable figure was he as he paced along the park, with the bar on his shoulder, his face dilated with the joy of a fresh morning, or of some new observation, or with the light of battle in argument or council. And, Schaibar-like, a hard hitter was he when meanness or abuses were to be crushed.

His walks were not, however, taken only for enjoyment. They were partly taken for the sake of health, were partly a training for his Alpine holiday. Every autumn he went to Switzerland. There the London physician became the ardent mountaineer. He was a member of the Alpine Club ; he made the first ascent of the Lyskamm in company with Professor Ramsay, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Hall, and others ; and the habit of observation led him to take great interest in the structure and movements of glaciers. For this holiday his walks were therefore a training. He used to run at intervals a hundred paces and at a good rate. Often he was to be seen scudding across the open in the park ; sometimes alone, sometimes with a friend. "There goes the medicus volans," was heard one morning, as two early walkers in the park pointed to a figure just descending with outblown skirts the slopes to the Serpentine. As the

time for his holiday approached, the walks in Hyde Park were sometimes extended for a run across the Regent's Park and a brisk ascent of Primrose Hill—"Monte Primrosa," as he used playfully to call it. It must be acknowledged that his attire in the winter walks was sometimes very comical. When he had crossed the Park and reached the Serpentine it was his custom to sit down on one of the benches, and, cigar in mouth, read the *Times*, watch the wild-fowl, or correct proofs. On a wet morning the outside of the *Times* was spread over the seat. In cold weather he would wear, in view of this part of his excursions, several coats, with perhaps a rug pinned over them. And then his run over the snow, with his open *Times* given to the breeze, his cheery face beaming above the flying strata of apparel, was indeed a pleasant thing to see. The early walks were not given up, even when he had been working late into the night. Sometimes, indeed, he started for them after reading or writing into the dawn. Yet he never seemed fatigued, and his interest in things encountered in the walk—a leaf-bud, a fungus, an incident of bird-life—never flagged. In his house, with his patients, in society, he was the most genial of men. The effusive warmth of his welcome to a friend, or even to an acquaintance, may well have carried, for the uninformed, a look of unreality. In sober truth this cordiality was not in the least assumed. It sprang from an impulsiveness which formed a pronounced

trait in his character, an impulsiveness neither shallow nor affected, but bidding him wear his heart upon his sleeve. So, to the new-comer who might be supposed to be worthy of respect or kindness, his great heart opened with generous cordiality ; for baseness, sordidness, or whatever might have a trace of wrong in his eyes, he had a manner as bitterly repellent. A strong vein of chivalry ran through him, to perhaps some exaggeration of courtesy, certainly to no stint of fierceness, as the balance of the honourable and dishonourable fell or rose before his eyes. To those who really knew him this impulsiveness was but a sign of the great strength with which his spirit was moved to do what he had in hand.

Between the duties of obligation which his path in life brought to him, and the work chosen of his love, there seemed often for many weeks no break. He passed directly from one to the other and back again. His morning consultations found his table crowded with books of reference, diagrams, tables, notes full or condensed. As the door closed on the last client the papers were once more arranged. As the day went on, and the scene of labour changed, drawing-room and bed-room were successively invaded by papers. Out of all this no small confusion would arise, and but for the loving help of his wife many a time would his work have been stopped by the difficulty of finding papers

mislaid during his migrations, or forgotten in the haste of changing duties. His pre-occupation made him often one of the most absent of men, and led to his mislaying papers or losing them, or leaving them behind him at places where he had taken them out to use in some spare, unoccupied moment. In the abstract he was orderly, but in his self-reliance he did all his own work for himself, and in intent sight of the details and objects of his work he overleapt order, neatness, and time; though he never neglected any detail bearing on his conclusions, nor slurred over a doubtful point, nor stated any conclusion which he had not accurately formed and rigorously tested. He was never careless, yet often lost much time through his impetuous eagerness in pursuit of the great end which he had in his view. From time to time, however, this energy claimed rest; and then either he went climbing the Alps, or he indulged his early acquired love of art. His studies bore much upon questions of the formal relations of parts. In his recreations also, form rather than colour attracted him. He enjoyed paintings, it is true. He might be seen at all the galleries of the season in turn. But his great delight was in the old Wedgwood ware. This was with him a question of form and intrinsic beauty, not of fashion. He did not value a vase for its rarity, but for its essential beauty. So he became a collector of this kind of ware, for that he found in it the hand of Flaxman.

He studied the work of Flaxman in this department until he became a judge and expert of undoubted authority. His collection of plaques, vases, and medallions was large and most beautifully arranged. The collection brought at public auction after his death a sum which, compared with the number of specimens, was very large.

It remains to say a few words as to the scope of Sibson's work. His published papers, complete and incomplete, are some thirty-nine in number. A large proportion of them relate to affections of the heart and lungs, and to the position of the viscera in health and disease. By these he will always be kept in the memory of men. His *Medical Anatomy*, although not the latest of his productions, must be regarded as the crown of his labours, and cannot fail to be used and quoted by all authors dealing with exactness of observation of internal diseases. One important advantage arising from the formation of the present collection will be found in the republication of his first important work—*On the Situation and Structure of the Internal Organs under varying circumstances of Health and Disease*—produced by him, as we have already seen, while still in general practice at Nottingham. Now and then one finds that some acute observer, like, for instance, Mr. Spencer Wells, digs this work out from its comparative obscurity and turns its wealth of information and accuracy of portraiture to effective use. To the many it is little known;

yet for the practitioner of medicine its usefulness perhaps exceeds even that of the *Medical Anatomy*. Around these salient monuments we find grouped about twenty papers, some intended, like that on "The Mechanism of Respiration," to broaden the base upon which the practical edifice is built; others marking the side paths of research into which Sibson loved from time to time to diverge. The study of the position and sounds of the heart led him to his elaborate articles on "Pericarditis" and "Endocarditis" in Reynolds's *System of Medicine;* the same study led him to minute investigations of the arterial states in Bright's Disease, which formed the subject of his Harveian Lectures, the last of his works. These lectures indeed are not included in the collection. The manuscripts which could be found were incomplete, a great part of the lectures having apparently been delivered extempore from notes. What remained were published in the *British Medical Journal* shortly after his death. Those Lectures, the Address in Medicine, and the articles in the *System of Medicine* appear to me to have been intended by him to be preliminary to some more condensed and summarised embodiment of his researches in two conterminous fields. They present us with a marvellous amount of exact information, laboriously arrayed, painfully overlaid with references denoting the interrelations of facts. We may perhaps best define them as such a mixture of classified memoranda with tentative conclusions, as a man

would arrange before him to aid his final judgment. If therefore the reader feels himself somewhat lost in the multitude of facts, and is conscious that on many points he is not put in possession of clearly stated inferences, he must remember that the hand of the artist was stayed by death while he was still occupied in fashioning his work; must remember that this is but the clay model for a work in marble; and be thankful for all the touches that the master's fingers have left.

A smaller group of papers relates to the subject of narcotic poisons. The effect of the inhalation of ether and chloroform in relieving certain kinds of neuralgia first engaged his attention; thence he travelled to the consideration of the administration of chloroform and ether, with especial reference to the mode in which death is produced by those narcotics; thence again to the more general subject of the action of the narcotic poisons. Herein he availed himself equally of clinical observation and of the literature of the subject. Herein again, as in dealing with affections of the respiratory organs, he made free use of illustrative experiments, and devised new apparatus for practical use. We see him here once more—at one time the experimental physiologist, at another the practical physician. These studies no doubt led to his being placed on the Chloroform Committee of the Royal Medico-Chirurgical Society. The Committee—a large one—

was appointed to inquire into the uses and the physiological, therapeutical, and toxical effects of chloroform, as well as into the best mode of administering it, and of obviating any ill consequences resulting from its administration. The Report, published in 1864, was most carefully elaborate and conclusive, and may fairly take its place among the classical literature of anæsthetics.

We must not omit to notice next his paper on 'The Fever of Nottingham,' published in 1847, seeing that it contains an early recognition of the distinction between abdominal or typhoid fever and petechial typhus, founded considerably on the observations of his friend, Dr. A. P. Stewart. In this communication both the diagnosis and ætiology are considered, and the relation of typhoid fever to filth and decaying organic matter is strongly maintained, though the infection is clearly regarded as occurring through atmospheric channels only; the question of water or other vehicles not being referred to.

Lastly, all his studies, as we have seen, did not lie within the pale of his profession. In letters from Waterton reference is made to a lecture on Gothic Architecture, delivered by him while in practice at Nottingham. Dr. Hodgkin, who corresponded frequently with Sibson at that time, and until his removal to London, adverts in one letter to this occurrence, expressing some doubt as to the wisdom of Sibson's action, and an opinion that such extra-

professional appearances in public might damage his practice. The manuscript of this lecture is not in existence. In connection with it Sibson is known to have made a large collection of architectural drawings, which were lent to a friend, after he came to London, and were never returned to him.

This is not the only memorial of Sibson that is lost. There is not extant any portrait which in the judgment of his friends constitutes a fair presentment of his personal appearance, whence it comes that no likeness is prefixed to this book. His friends will need no such help to recall him to vivid memory. He will live in the value and influence of his labours which, as they are illustrated in this collected record, may tell to those who follow without having known him something of the individuality of the labourer.

W. M. O.